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After Ambassador Huang's call on Secretary Kissinger yesterday he immediately brought the Premier's message to the attention of the President, who directed him to do everything possible to facilitate this humanitarian request. The US side has been in touch with its Embassy in Phnom Penh, and has received a reply.

President Lon Nol will permit Queen Kossamak to leave Cambodia for Peking or any other destination upon receipt of a written request from any authorized member of the royal family. He will permit Air France to evacuate the Queen from Phnom Penh "on its own responsibility." The authorized representative could be Prince Monireth who resides in Phnom Penh, Princess Bopho Devi who is believed to be in Hong Kong, or another member of the royal family.

The U.S. Government will help to assure that the written request is made and accepted, and suggests that arrangements can now be made for the Air France charter flight. If a contact is needed by Air France to facilitate arrangements in Phnom Penh, the American Charge of Embassy, Mr. Enders, will assist. The Queen Mother will need to be accompanied by medical and perhaps a few other persons on the flight. The US will be glad to use its good offices to see that appropriate persons are allowed to leave Phnom Penh with her, or, in the event that the accompanying persons come to Phnom Penh on the charter aircraft, that arrangements are made for their arrival and departure.

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

TOP SECRET-EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 16, 1973
TIME: 5:45pm - 6:30pm
PLACE: The Secretary's Office

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger
Winston Lord, Director, Planning and Coordination Staff
Arthur Hummel, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Ambassador Huang Chen, Chief of the PRC Liaison Office
Mr. Chien Ta-Yung, PRC Liaison Office
Mr. Chi Chao Chu, Interpreter, PRC Liaison Office

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Ambassador Huang: I know the Secretary is very busy.

The Secretary: Yes. I have two problems. One a minor one. As far as my trip to China is concerned, you authorized fifteen journalists. It now turns out that there will be one camera crew which makes for three people. Therefore we were wondering if we could go as high as seventeen journalists, including the camera crew.

Ambassador Huang: Personally speaking, I don't see there is any problem with them but this will be reported.

The Secretary: Can you let us know?

Ambassador Huang: Certainly. We will reply. In addition you wish to add two more, making seventeen.

The Secretary: Altogether there will be seventeen including three on the camera crew.

We have a reply for you from Prince Sihanouk. (The Secretary hands over the note at Tab A and the interpreter reads it for the

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Ambassador who asks questions as he goes through it.) This is for the Prime Minister.

Ambassador Huang: With respect to the phrase "on its own responsibility", this is rather obscure. Suppose the plane from Air France is shot down by Lon Nol planes, what will happen?

The Secretary: That will not happen.

Ambassador Huang: I was just wondering what "on its own responsibility" referred to.

The Secretary: That cannot happen. (To Mr. Hummel) What does it mean?

Ambassador Hummel: It is from the Government. They can't assume responsibility for Air France. Perhaps if the Ambassador goes further in the note he will realize that.

The Secretary: It means that Air France has to make the arrangements. The Cambodian Government will not make arrangements.

Ambassador Huang: That is certain, of course.

The Secretary: There is no possibility of their plane being shot down by the Cambodian Government. We will see to that. (The interpreter continues reading and the Ambassador asks him to read another section again.)

We'll ask our Charge in Phnom Penh to request members of the Royal household there to make a formal request.

Ambassador Huang: I will report this very quickly to the Government and to see what procedures will be used.

The Secretary: We will send another message to our people there concerning the phrase on "responsibility". You can be sure if we submit a message to the Prime Minister we will not permit anything to happen that is in our power to prevent.

Ambassador Huang: In view of your explanation we fully understand. There is no need for another message.

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The Secretary: You can be sure that it will be handled in a decent and honest way.

Ambassador Huang: Yes, I believe that. Of course I will report this very quickly to my Government. Just as a personal observation, purely a personal observation, the only possible obstacle I see is that in making this request for a member of the Royal family perhaps the matter could continue to be obstructed since originally this was a request from the Prime Minister to the Secretary for the President.

The Secretary: The only reason they must request this is if the Queen Mother falls ill on the way to Peking they will not be accused of having thrown her out of the country. We will undertake to obtain the request.

Ambassador Huang: Well, as I said, this is a purely personal observation.

I don't know whether Prince Sihanouk will like this or not. Originally this request was from the Premier to the President...

The Secretary: We will do the following. We can change the message; let us obtain the request and that way you have to take no formal notice of it.

Ambassador Hummel: In the third paragraph it says that we will see that the request is accepted.

The Secretary: We said that we will see to it. We will do two things. In the formal note we will rewrite it and leave out the formality. It will be for the information of the Prime Minister. For the Prince we can give a simple note that says that we will arrange for the departure of the Queen Mother for Peking. After all, how we arrange this is of no interest to anybody. We didn't ask you how you arranged the departure of Downey from China.

Ambassador Huang: But you are still going through the process of obtaining a request from a member of the Royal home?

The Secretary: Yes, but we will do that on our own responsibility. We will take the initiative on our own without involving you. You have requested us to be helpful. We will see to it

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that the Queen Mother will get to the airplane. How we do it is really not your business. I don't say this impolitely.

We will redo your note so that it simply says that as to the request of the Prime Minister we were in touch with the authorities in Phnom Penh on this basis. On the basis of this communication we can assure you that the Queen Mother can leave Phnom Penh. The rest is just to tell you when and whom to get in touch with.

Ambassador Huang: So far this message concerns the Queen only. I will certainly convey this immediately to my Government. It was only a personal observation. Personally speaking, I fully understand the sincerity of Dr. Kissinger and the President and their willingness to help. The personal attitude is very clear. This is just a personal observation. Originally it was a note from the Premier to President Nixon to solve the problem and now you have members of the Royal household in Phnom Penh, and that might make it awkward--just as a personal observation. It makes it more complex. I am not sure whether Prince Sihanouk would like it or not. As a personal observation it would have been much simpler if your Embassy could ask Lon Nol to let the Queen Mother board the Air France plane. I am sure Prince Sihanouk would be very grateful for that.

The Secretary: (To Hummel) Can we attempt that?

Ambassador Hummel: As it says, we can assure that the results will be achieved. The Government of Phnom Penh seems to want to have a request from somebody.

The Secretary: Maybe we can make the request. All right we will handle it.

Ambassador Huang: Prince Sihanouk undertakes not to make use of the Queen Mother to engage in political struggle.

The Secretary: We will undertake the responsibility. We have to ask again because it is a sovereign government, but I am practically certain that we can assume responsibility on our own and if they need a request we will make the request. (The Ambassador nods assent.)

Ambassador Huang: What about this message? Should we still report this message home?

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The Secretary: What do you think?

Ambassador Huang: It does not matter.

The Secretary: You can report on our conversation, but we have to go back to Phnom Penh. We will have to clarify the procedures and we will let you know tomorrow. If you want to wait until tomorrow to report, it is all right too.

Ambassador Huang: Suppose I just report this message and my personal observations and what you have observed and that the US Government will take responsibility for making the request, that is the US Government will undertake this on its own.

The Secretary: I can't be a hundred percent certain until we have talked to the Phnom Penh Government. Let me tell you now, Mr. Ambassador, there is no sense doing this unless it is done in a humane and generous fashion. If this turns into a political game there is no sense doing it. We are doing it in a humanitarian spirit and out of great respect for the Prime Minister and therefore we will try to do it in a way that creates the least problems for the Prime Minister.

Ambassador Huang: I fully understand.

The Secretary: I want him to understand that we have acted in this manner. We will be in touch with you tomorrow. The best thing would be to report this message and your observations and our reply.

Ambassador Huang: I fully understand. This is in an entirely friendly spirit.

Okay, we will report this and my observations and your reply. In fact, the Prince might agree to this procedure; then my observation was superfluous. I personally hope we can solve this very quickly.

The Secretary: We also will make no political capital out of this.

Ambassador Huang: I hope this can be solved quickly. We don't wish to bother you any further on a day-by-day basis on this.

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The Secretary: It is always a joy to see you.

Ambassador Huang: I know you are very busy.

The Secretary: You report to the Prime Minister, and we will be in touch with you. By this time tomorrow it will be settled. We want the Queen Mother to leave Phnom Penh with dignity, and that we will accomplish.

Ambassador Huang: I fully understand the good intentions on the part of the President. All I am worried about is simplicity.

The Secretary: We will make it as simple as we can.

Ambassador Huang: Tomorrow there is no need to bother you. We can talk to Mr. Hummel or Mr. Lord. They can talk to Mr. Chien or to me.

The Secretary: Mr. Hummel will be in touch with you. I just wanted the pleasure of discussing something pleasant with you.

Ambassador Huang: So long as there is no question of taking up your time, of course, it is a pleasure.

The Secretary: Mr. Hummel will be in touch with you tomorrow.

We are informing all the Arab countries that since I am going to Peking the war must be ended in the Middle East very soon. We are telling this to Israel also. (Ambassador Huang laughs.)

Note: Tab A was handed back informally to Mr. Hummel by Mr. Chien on Wednesday, October 17, 1973, the Chinese confirming that they had sent the substance to Peking.

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